



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

March 2025 Newsletter

March Dates

Thurs 13th March : Indoor Meeting : "Grow Moss for Peat's Sake" : 7.30pm : Cutgate

Thurs 20th March : Local Walk : Middleton Area : 10.30am :

Sat 22nd March : Coach Trip : Sizergh Estate and Lyth Valley : 9.00am : ***BOOKING NEEDED***

ADVANCED NOTICE :

Sat 12th April : Coach Trip : Kirby Stephen, N. Yorks : 9.00am ***BOOKING NEEDED***

Keep an eye on your email, our website, WhatsApp group and Facebook page for any updates to these proposed events.

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

Indoor Meeting : Thursday 13th March : "Grow Moss for Peat's Sake" : Gill Wrigley : Cutgate : 7-30 p.m.

Our new co-chair, Gill Wrigley, will be wearing a different hat this evening as Sphagnum Project Officer for Calderdale Council.

With the National Lottery funded Calderdale Sphagnum Project, Gill, a horticulturalist, has developed a method of growing Sphagnum moss in a nursery environment.

She is now teaching conservation organisations across the country to 'Grow Moss for Peat's Sake'.

Gill will bring along some of the many species of sphagnum moss that the project has been growing and explain its importance in habitat creation and peat restoration.



Members £3 per meeting, Non-Members £4 per meeting.

Tea, coffee, and cake available - please make a donation towards cost.

There is parking on the Cutgate shopping precinct and the Norden bus stops near the church.

We are always needing members to help with setting up the room and tidying up afterwards, so if

you can spare a few minutes just come a bit early or stay behind after.

Local Walk : Thurs 20th March 10.30am : Middleton Area : Charlie Farrell.

Join us for a walk through Alkrington Woods and Middleton looking at birds, some fungi and trees. The paths are generally flat and well established, though some sections have suffered damage from rains and flooding. The council have been working recently to strengthen the banks of the River Irk and to restore damaged sections of the riverside paths.

We will be able to look out for winter water birds around Rhodes Lodges, perhaps some winter thrushes around Limefield as well as residents such as Grey Wagtail, Kingfisher and Dipper along the River Irk and Ring-necked Parakeets in the main wood. Fungi-wise, we hope to find some fresh Scarlet Elf Cup, perhaps Jelly Ear and Candlesnuff fungi. Along Boardman Brook and

around some of the smaller ponds we may find some Marsh Marigold, Lesser Celandine and Coltsfoot as well as the more obviously planted Snowdrops etc. Meanwhile many of the trees will be beginning to bud.

Around lunchtime, we will make our way towards the Arndale Centre in Middleton Town Centre, to avail ourselves of the nearest Toilets. Here we can possibly twitch the local Rooks snacking on leftover McDonalds Takeaways and some Pied Wagtails before heading back into the wood for lunch and a further walk through the woodlands, before returning to the car park.

Meet at 10.30am in the car park at Rhodes Lodges. On Manchester Old Road at M24 4DT
<http://alkringtonwoods.org/>



Coach Trip : Sat 22nd March : Sizergh Estate and Lyth Valley: 9.00am: Karen & Rick Cowley

The coach will drop us at Sizergh Castle, South Cumbria, where there is a café (indoor seating plus outside seating on a covered veranda and picnic tables), N.T. shop, second hand bookshop and toilets. **All will be open all day until 5pm when the Coach will depart for Rochdale.** There are many miles of Walking Trails on the Sizergh estate which are **FREE** for everyone.



The Castle is open between 12 noon and 4pm (last entrance at 3.15 pm) All the Ground floor is fully accessible (see website [Sizergh - National Trust | AccessAble](#)) Sometimes on Saturdays there are Guided Tours around the House at 11am before the general public enter – but this will only be announced on the day itself. The Gardens are accessible and include a renowned Limestone Rock Garden and Stumpery. The latter holds a hardy fern collection of over 175 species and cultivars including the National Collection of 4 genera, namely Bladder, Hart's Tongue, Male and Royal ferns with their many forms.

Entrance to the House and Garden is free to National Trust members but costs:

GARDEN only : £10 pp HOUSE AND GARDEN : £14 pp

(NB these prices may be reduced slightly if there are more than 15 National Trust Members on our Coach – **Please ALL bring your N.T. Cards!**)

We will lead a walk of about **4 ½ miles** over pasture, through woods and by a wetland area in the Lyth Valley where there is a small hide. Parts of the walk have tremendous views over Morecambe Bay and the Lake District fells. It includes diverse habitats and the Woodlands include many Veteran and Important trees, some of which you will see on the Trails. Hornbeams grow just outside the car park where Hawfinches are sometimes seen in March and April. It will be early spring in this part of Cumbria so we may see departing winter birds and early migrants and flowers, including wild daffodils.

It will be possible to shorten this walk to **2 ½ miles**/ about 1 ½ hours, leaving time to visit the House and Garden afterwards if you wish. There is also a circular Accessible Trail of **1 mile**, “The Holeslack Trail”, which overlaps with the main group walk and which can be used with wheelchairs and trampers.

The pastures can be wet underfoot but we will advise on the conditions nearer the time. Tracks through the woodland are very good. There are no stiles on any of the suggested routes. There are moderate gradients on the shorter route and one short, steep section across a field on the longer walk. One track crosses the path of a small spring which can normally be walked across with only the soles of one's shoes getting wet. If not, a short diversion through the wood is necessary.

There are **2 Trampers** available to borrow if booked in advance at 10.30 am and 1pm – they can be used in most parts of the Garden and on the Holeslack Trail. [Book Online | Outdoor Mobility](#) Early booking is advised.

The trip is open to friends and family. But please remind your friends that :

Our trips are run by our Members for Members. Everyone joins our excursions at their own risk. The full statement on our liability may be read on our website [Disclaimer – Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society](#) and was published in the January 2025 Newsletter.

The coach will leave Manchester Road cul-de-sac at 9.00am promptly and set off on the return journey **at 5.00pm**. The cost is £20. Contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com with any queries. Please pay your £20 beforehand by bank transfer : Sort code 05-07-67 Account number 60931963 and use your name as reference. Then email rfnspublicity@gmail.com to book your place. Please note your place is not reserved until you receive a reply to that email. Cheques should be made payable to “**Rochdale** Field Naturalists' Society.

Leaders: Karen and Rick Cowley 01706 853791

'Minute To Midnight' at Galley Oldham : Gill Wrigley

'What is the role of the artist at the end of time?'

I'm so glad that we were invited to attend the special event at Gallery Oldham on 5th February, where we met landscape artist Rebecca Chesney who explained her work, which creatively edits pages from Holborn's 1957 'Popular Handbook of British Birds'. She demonstrated her passion about reversing the Ecological Emergency and in finding ways to get this message across to others.

Other thought-provoking artwork came from Antony Hall, who, (close to my heart) had developed a 'Moss meander map' and a beautiful display of Oldham mosses in glass bottle terrariums found on his meanders. There are huge satellite images of 'Cattle Feedlots', complete with toxic slurry pits by artist Mischa Henner, and Adele Jordan's 'Artificial flowers', a garland of plastic bottle flowers with a single plastic bottle flower in a half gallon of crude oil which is the amount of oil consumed in the creation of the plastic bottles in the garland.

If you can, I strongly recommend a visit to Gallery Oldham to see this installment which is **on until 1st March. Entry is free.**



Feedback from the "Minute to Midnight" Exhibition

"I'm so glad I made it to the 'Minute to midnight' event at Gallery Oldham today. The photos don't do it justice. If you get a chance, do visit. It's on until 1st March"

"I would recommend it too. I liked the info about oil and plastic. Also, the neat window frames. If anyone has one they want to dispose of I'd like it to make a notice board at my Wardle Wildlife garden."

"I think RFNS local (ID) walks should be renamed local meanders as it describes what we do 😊"

"Who knew that duvets and dog coats contained so much oil!"

"Love the 'so cold I can barely think detail'. How many local field nat dawdles has that been a theme?!"

Clouds Lucy Entwisle

1. All Hail Cumulus!
Drifting galleon majestic Heaven's Queen,
Billowing floating on the ether -
Sun catching the sheen.
Deep purpling beneath her.

2. Train-bearers trail carrying her tails
In small low procession.
Gentle breezes fill her ebullient sails.
The Atmosphere her possession.

3. A flotilla -
The troops of Homeland gather in mackerel skies,
Stealthily chasing the enemy now receding.
Cirrus wisps join your loyal allies
In readiness defending.

4. Distant thunder clouds gathering rumbling -
Momentary fleeting flashes -
The skies from top to bottom splitting.
Canon throwing cascading splashes
In horizontal dashes.

5. Threatening attack preying usurpers,
Awaiting a chance to acquire.
Glowering menacing their purpose -
Dominance of her Empire.

6. The clearful blue commends the liaison
To make the welcome Sun appear.
Ruling alone the diapason
Of the Troposphere.
All threats cease!

Cumulus - Reign in Peace!

Addendum

Refs

Wikipedia, BBC, The Met Office, Google

Above the Troposphere:

Extreme level: Polar mesospheric - 80-85km (49miles)

Very high level: Polar stratospheric - noctilucent - water ice crystals

Troposphere: where clouds are found - 9km (5.6miles) depth UK

High: cirro-, cirrus,

Middle: altocumulus, altostratus

Low: strato, stratus, nimbo, small cumulus

Multi-level, towering : nimbo-, cumulo-, cumulus)

5 types:

Stratiform sheets

Cirriform wisps and patches

Strato cumuliform patches, rolls, ripples

Cumuliform heaps

Cumulo nimbiform vertical towers with complex structures

Fog, Mist Clouds that touch the Earth

Lightning Giant spark of electricity in atmosphere.

Sheet - Cloud to cloud, Cloud to ground

Thunder Sound wave created by lightning that heats the air around it.

April Newsletter : If you have something you would like included in the April 2025 newsletter, please send it to rfsnewsletter@gmail.com by **Tuesday 25th March**